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### The President's Message.

The President's message, read to Congress on the 5th of December, had been awaited with interest, though on all important matters it was clear beforehand what he would say. We note here only what is said of our relations with foreign countries.

In his review of these relations, he refers to the service rendered by our minister at Buenos Ayres as umpire in an arbitration between the Argentine Republic and Chili. An extradition treaty has been made with the Argentine Republic. The Austro-Hungarian government's claim for indemnity for the killing of certain subjects of that country by the authorities of Pennsylvania in suppressing a riot at Lattimer had been carefully considered, and the government, following its long-established doctrine, was constrained to decline liability to indemnify the sufferers. Allusion was made with pleasure to the lessening of restrictions by the Belgian government on the importation of cattle from this country.

Our government had declined to be represented at a congress at Brussels to revise the provisions of the general act of 1890 for the suppression of the African slave trade, but reserved the right of accession to the result. Our minister to Bolivia had remained at his post during the successful insurrection in that country, and had then been directed to enter into relations with the new government. The extradition treaty with Brazil had been completed by the ratification of the Brazilian legislature. The long-standing controversy with Colombia over the seizure of an American-owned newspaper had been amicably settled by the authorities of Colombia agreeing to pay \$30,000 in three annual instalments. Colombia had cordially extended facilities of investigation to the commission which is to examine the Panama Canal route. No results had yet been obtained in the discussions with Denmark as to the restrictions on the importation of American cattle. Reference is made in the message to the revolution in Santo Domingo and to the new government, into relations with which ours has entered; also to the failure of the federation of Nicaragua, Honduras and Salvador, and the rearrangement of ministers thereby necessitated.

The President again calls the attention of Congress to the importance of an isthmian canal, for which he now finds stronger reasons than before. He is pleased with the friendliness shown this country by Chili, in assisting the warship Newark when in distress, and also with her adherence to the Bureau of American Republics, in which organization every independent American state now shares. He renews his recommendation that a commission be appointed to study the commercial and industrial conditions in the Chinese empire, and report as to the opportunities offered there for the raw materials and manufactures of the United States. The President alludes at con-

siderable length to the unbroken historic ties of this country with France, and to the Paris Exposition, and is confident that the American Exhibit, in which the unprecedented number of over seven thousand exhibitors will take part, will be one of great value to the world. Our relations with Germany are declared to be most cordial, and our rivalry with her in commerce should be generous and open. Reciprocity negotiations with her are in progress, and points of difference as to insurance, food importation, etc., are in the way of being satisfactorily adjusted.

The message points out the work of the joint high commission in endeavoring to adjust the difficulties with Canada, the failure to finish its work, and expressed the hope that the temporary adjustment of the question of boundary may soon lead to a permanent one. All our relations with Great Britain in our "vast and intricate intercourse" with her have been most friendly. The government has observed strict neutrality in the case of the unfortunate war in South Africa, and the President declares, we are glad to see, that he would have been pleased to offer to mediate if circumstances had suggested that the parties would have welcomed the tender of good offices.

Referring to the lynching of Italian subjects in Louisiana, the fourth instance of the kind within the decade, the President repeats the wise suggestion, made by President Harrison, that Congress should confer upon the federal courts jurisdiction in the case of offences against the treaty rights of foreigners domiciled in the United States. A cable to Manila is recommended. The friendly relations with Japan are commented upon, and the fact noted of her entrance into the sisterhood of nations as a fully independent power, and the admirable way in which she has performed so far the new duties thereby assumed.

The year has been marked, the message says, by constant increase in the intimacy of our relations with Mexico, a new extradition treaty has been made, the international water boundary commission is still at work, and this government has omitted no opportunity to strengthen and perpetuate the long-existing cordiality between the two countries. Russia, with which most friendly relations have continued, has shown her loyalty to the beneficent principle of arbitration by agreeing to submit to an arbitrator the question of claims growing out of the seizure of American vessels in Behring Sea. The Samoan difficulties have been finally adjusted by an agreement in accordance with which England withdraws, and the islands are divided between this country and Germany. Claims growing out of losses caused by the suppression of the insurrection have been submitted to a commission for adjustment.

The President declares that our minister to Turkey continues under instructions to press for the settlement of claims for the loss of American property

in the empire. Our relations with the Porte are far from satisfactory, because of the refusal of Turkey to recognize the alien status of native Turks naturalized abroad, and because of the arbitrary treatment of some American productions. Gratification is expressed that the friction between Great Britain and Venezuela has been ended by the award of the Arbitration Commission. The work of our consuls in reporting on foreign trade is declared to be most valuable. Commercial and reciprocity treaties with several countries have been negotiated, and others are under way.

A review of all these matters touched by the message shows how vast and intricate our international relations have become, and what a field they offer for patient wisdom and for the promotion of international good feeling and friendly coöperation. We are glad to be able to say that in these relations our government has for the most part pursued a course which commends itself to the hearty approval of the friends of peace and international concord. The Hague Conference is treated by the President as one of the most important international events of the year, and he declares that "the convention for the pacific settlement of international conflicts may be regarded as realizing the earnest desire of great numbers of American citizens, whose deep sense of justice, expressed in numerous resolutions and memorials, has urged them to labor for this noble achievement."

The two subjects most extensively treated in the message are those of Cuba and the Philippine Islands. The treatment of the Cuban question is, on the whole, satisfactory. The President declares that the joint resolution adopted by Congress on April 19, 1898, to leave the government and control of the island to its people, has given the Cubans a pledge which is "of the highest honorable obligation and must be sacredly kept." His treatment of the subject would have been more satisfactory if he had omitted some sentences about "turning adrift any loosely framed commonwealth to face the vicissitudes which too often attend weaker states," etc. There has been a strong feeling in Cuba that President McKinley has meant to annex the island, and such an utterance as this takes a good deal of the force out of the declaration about sacredly keeping the government's pledge.

Half of what the President says on the subject of the Philippines is a long, special plea, in our judgment fundamentally erroneous, for the occupancy of the country by the United States and for the righteousness of the war which has been waged against the Filipino forces. The rest of his remarks are devoted to a statement of what has been done in organizing civil government, and of the grave responsibilities resting upon Congress in saying how the islands shall be governed. He takes pains, however, to tell Congress that nothing but American sovereignty is, in his judgment, possible; that an independent govern-

ment under an American protectorate is not worthy of serious consideration; that such a thing would be "the beginning of an era of misery and violence worse than any which has darkened their unhappy past." It is hard to restrain one's pen in presence of this sweeping Presidential derogation of the Filipino leaders and people and un-American plea for the right to the territory of ten millions of people by conquest of arms and without any wish or permitted choice of their own. But we have not space to discuss the matter here, and, besides, the other side of the question has already been fully presented in our columns.

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### Editorial Notes.

#### Report on the Hague Convention.

The President sent to the Senate on December 20 the convention agreed to at the Hague Conference last July, for the pacific settlement of international controversies, and the declaration to prohibit for five years the launching of explosives from balloons. The President's message was a mere formal letter of transmittal, except that it invited attention to an accompanying report from the Secretary of State urging immediate action by the Senate. We give the Secretary's report below. It is expected that the Senate will take the matter up soon after it reassembles after the holidays, and that it will give its assent to ratification without much delay. The impression prevails among some that the convention was to be ratified before the first of January or lapse. But this is not true. Article 58 provided that "the present convention shall be ratified with as little delay as possible." There is, therefore, in fact no time limit. But it will be a great gain if the Senate acts promptly, as we believe it will. Much greater force will be given to the convention and the important organization which will follow its ratification if it goes into effect immediately and with the sincere and hearty support of the Senate of the United States.

#### Secretary Hay's Recommendation.

To the President: The undersigned, Secretary of State, has the honor to lay before the President, with a view to their transmission to the Senate, to receive the advice and consent of that body to their ratification, a copy of a convention for the pacific settlement of international disputes, signed at The Hague on July 29, 1899, by the plenipotentiaries of the United States, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Mexico, France, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Persia, Portugal, Roumania, Russia, Siam, Sweden and Norway and Bulgaria; and a copy of a declaration to prohibit for a term of five years the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other new methods of a similar nature, signed at The Hague on July 19, 1899, by the plenipotentiaries of the United States and the